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Norwegian ex-diplomat guilty of espionage for Soviets, Iraq

OSLO, Norway (UPI) — A former deputy government minister was sentenced yesterday to a maximum 20 years in prison for spying for the Soviet Union and Iraq in Norway's most serious espionage case.

An Oslo district court found defendant Arne Treholt guilty on virtually all 52 counts, including giving Moscow detailed plans for the nuclear and conventional defense of Norway against a possible Soviet invasion. Norway makes up NATO's northern flank.

Presiding Judge Astri Rynning, head of a seven-member panel, ordered Treholt to pay the government \$146,000 — including money the Soviets and Iraqis paid him for spying.

The verdict was read to Treholt, a 42-year-old deputy government minister, in a heavily guarded courtroom.

Wearing a gray suit and purple tie, the one-time U.N. diplomat stood and listened impassively as Mr. Rynning read the verdict. The former Labor Party politician bowed his head slightly just before Mr. Rynning's sentence.

Prosecutor Lasse Quigstad demanded that Treholt be found guilty on all 52 counts and sentenced to a maximum 20-year prison term.

The prosecutor also demanded that Treholt pay \$120,000 to the government, money which he said the defendant

received from the Soviets and Iraqis for his alleged espionage.

Treholt admitted giving Moscow classified material gleaned from his work at the United Nations from 1979 to 1982 but denied he was a spy.

He was serving as head of the Foreign Ministry press section when he was arrested at Oslo airport Jan. 20, 1984, admittedly heading for Vienna to meet a KGB friend. Police said his briefcase was crammed with 66 classified documents.

Once described as a model diplomat, the former Labor Party politician told the court he had used unconventional diplomatic methods in hopes of promoting better East-West relations.

For reasons of national security, little evidence was presented in open court during the 11-week trial. For most of the 49 working days since the trial began, experts debated behind closed doors whether Treholt had compromised national security.

Treholt allegedly had 120 contacts in nine years with Soviet KGB intelligence officers and was charged with spying for the Soviet Union since 1974 and for Iraq since 1980.

Most charges dealt with classified defense material Treholt came across while attending Oslo's prestigious National Defense College in 1982 and 1983.

In recent years the Western alliance has been plagued by cases of its own citizens spying for the Soviets. Last month, Thomas Patrick Cavanagh, a California aerospace engineer, was sentenced to life imprisonment for trying to sell Stealth bomber secrets to the Soviets. Richard W. Miller, an FBI agent, was arrested last October and charged with conspiring with his Russian lover to sell secret government documents.

In December 1983, Dieter Gerhardt, a former commodore in the South African navy, was sentenced to life imprisonment after confessing to having spied for the Soviet Union for 20 years. His wife, Ruth, received a 10-year sentence.

Last October, a British journalist published a book alleging that the late Sir Roger Hollis, director of Britain's internal security agency from 1956 to 1965, was probably a Soviet agent during his 27 years in British intelligence.

This month, seven British servicemen stationed in Cyprus were charged with passing top-secret military information. The five airmen and two soldiers, all communications specialists, are alleged to have been blackmailed into spying after being seduced and photographed in "homosexual orgies."

And in one of the most dramatic and potentially damaging recent espionage

cases, retired U.S. Navy warrant officer John A. Walker, his sailor son Michael Walker, his elder brother Arthur J. Walker and retired Navy radioman Jerry A. Whitworth have been charged with spying for the Soviet Union. Authorities believe that the espionage, which may have begun as long ago as the 1960s, enabled the Soviets to gain extremely valuable information on American submarine capabilities.

Lou Marano and Kathleen Bailey contributed to this report.